

TRAINING PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF COLOMBIA (PCC)

The Communist Party of Colombia (PCC) became a legal party on 1 December 1957, after a long period of repression. Shortly thereafter the Central Committee met at Viota for the purpose of reorganizing the PCC in view of its newly acquired status, and planned a National Congress. The purpose of the Congress, which took place in December 1958, was to adopt revised Party statutes and to approve a new Party program in accordance with the requirements of status of legality.

Following the Congress, and apparently as a direct result thereof, the PCC began a determined effort to "raise the ideological and political level" of its membership. The first manifestation of the PCC's increased attention to training occurred in March 1959 with the organization of a medium-level cadre school in Bogota. The objective of the school, which had about thirty students, was to train Communists to be leaders of trade unions or other Communist-dominated organizations, and eventually to become full-time Party workers.

Most of the instructors at the school were members of the Bogota Regional Committee or of the Central Committee of the PCC. The course included instruction on world and Colombian history, principles of political economy, principles and methods of union organization, and a short history of Marxism. Information concerning the duration of the course is not available.

In May 1959 it was reported that the Central Committee and the Bogota Regional Committee had started advanced training and leadership courses of medium-level Party members in Bogota. The subject matter of these courses was limited to the Party Program and duties, and the current political line.

Participants in the course were to be assigned later to teach the same material to members of PCC cells. Once a sufficient number of cell members had received the training, they were expected to pass this Communist orientation on to members of Party-sponsored study circles.

Presumably, the materials in the above course were the "study guides" prepared by the National Education Commission of the PCC which made their appearance in April or May 1959. These study guides, which were designed for Party cells and study circles, bore the following titles:

"How to Study the Statutes of the Communist Party of Colombia"

"Guide for the Study of the Programmatic Declaration of the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Colombia"

"Guide for the Study of the Political Resolution of the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Colombia"

In addition to these study guides the PCC also began issuing, or reissuing, a series of educational manuals of which five had appeared as of November 1959. These educational manuals are intended for use to educate low and low-level members of the PCC, as well as in Party cells and study circles. The bookslets are entitled:

"Que Es y Por Que Lucha el Partido Comunista" (What Is The Communist Party and for What Does it Struggle?)

"Cursos Sindical Elemental" (Elementary Trade Union Courses)

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"Curso de Filosofia de Maosuia" (Short Course of Elementary Philosophy)

"La Rectificación S-4 Estilo" (The Rectification of Style)

"Como Ser Un Buen Comunista" (How to Be a Good Communist).

The first three booklets are each divided into a series of several lessons, and each contains suggestions for additional reading. The fourth booklet is a summary of lectures given in Peking in 1956 by leaders of the Communist Party of China on the construction of that Party. The fifth booklet is the text of a speech given in 1957 by Li Hsien-kuo, Chairman of the People's Republic of China and a member of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party. The inclusion of the latter two booklets indicates that the PCC regards the Chinese Communist Party very highly as a model.

It appears that the PCC may have achieved a degree of success in its training programs. In June 1959 a source whose reliability cannot be judged stated that the PCC had organized five training schools in Bogota for Communist workers and cadres. Three of these schools were being held in the houses of Party members, while the other two were being held respectively in the Party's labor center (Casa Sindical) and in the offices of Voz de la Disciplina, the weekly publication of the PCC. The nature of these courses was not disclosed and it is possible that these "training schools" were in fact study circles conducted by Party leaders. According to source these Party schools and training courses supplement the long-established centers of the PCC in Vieta.

In October 1959 the Education Commission of the Bogota Regional Committee initiated a training program which has three principal objectives: to improve Party cadre work

through intensive training courses, particularly for medium-level members of the PCC; to raise the cultural level of poorly-educated members by teaching them to read and write, thus preparing them for a better understanding of Party concepts; and to improve the understanding of the objectives and doctrines of Communism in all ranks of the Party by an increased emphasis on the discussion and study of Party publications and by the publication of a series of pamphlets outlining Party thinking on Colombian history, International relations and similar subjects.

As part of this program of the Education Commission, the PCC established a multi-level cadre school on Carrera 13 between Calles 14 and 15 in Bogota. The school began with a series of courses in the elements of philosophy. These are to be followed by a similar series of courses on economics and labor organization. Each course lasts a month, and a different group of about two-hundred students, who are selected by the eight now existing districts which the Party in Bogota is organized, attends each course. Alvaro VASQUEZ del Real, a member of the PCC Executive Committee, is one of the principal instructors.

It is probable that the above school actually is being held in the offices of Problemas de Latinoamericano y del Socialismo, a Spanish-language edition of the International Communist journal, Problems of Latin America. These offices are located at "Avenida 13-16, 13-17, Edificio 203, Bogota" where Alvaro VASQUEZ del Real is responsible for the publication in Bogota. A person living in the same building has stated that classes for about twenty-five students are held in these offices several nights a week.